



# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR MILWAUKEE/WOW COUNTIES

MILWAUKEE, WASHINGTON, OZAUKEE AND WAUKESHA COUNTIES

March 2004

## Payrolls Increase Slightly in February

**Milwaukee County's** unemployment rate increased three-tenths of a percentage point to 7.1 percent in February. The number of unemployed increased by over 1,800 from the previous month and the number of employed increased at twice the rate of unemployed as February brought about an additional 3,900 employed into the labor force. Compared to last

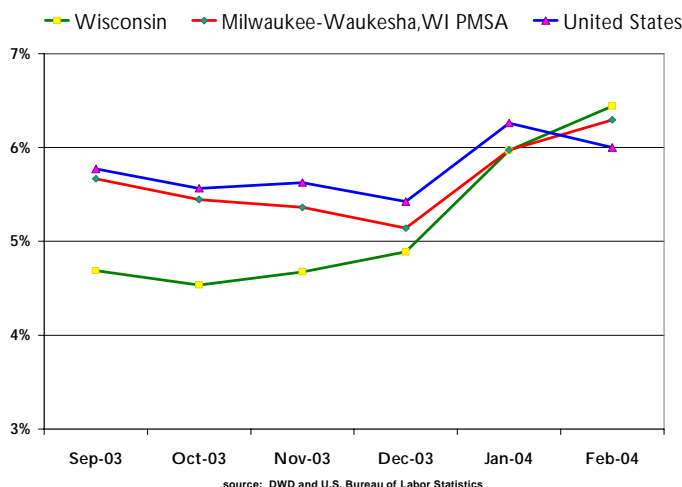
February, Milwaukee County's unemployment rate is lower than the 7.5 percent clip registered in February 2003 with 6,200 more employed residents and 1,900 fewer unemployed.

February labor force figures for **Washington County** also indicate a rise in the unemployment rate, up five-tenths to 5.9 percent. Most counties in the state

have continued to show subdued unemployment rates relative to year ago figures and Washington County, at this time, has 900 more employed residents and over 400 fewer unemployed bringing the unemployment down seven-tenths compared to last February.

**Ozaukee County** is one of only eight counties in the state to see an increase in its unemployment rate compared to last February. February 2004's rate was measured at 4.8 percent, the lowest in the metro area, but it increased over the month and year by four-tenths and one-tenth of a percentage point, respectively. It should be noted that, annually, Ozaukee gained 650 more employed residents to its 60 additional unemployed demonstrating that a labor force this size can see its unemployment rate increase with a relatively small increase in its number of unemployed.

Six-Month Unemployment Rate Watch



**Waukesha County's** unem-

## Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Southeast Wisconsin counties: February 2004

	Wisconsin			Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA			Milwaukee County		
	Feb-04	Jan-04	Feb-03	Feb-04	Jan-04	Feb-03	Feb-04	Jan-04	Feb-03
Labor force	3,100,443	3,082,205	3,043,457	827,415	817,587	819,663	488,342	482,676	484,071
Employed	2,900,761	2,898,195	2,830,758	775,334	768,753	764,718	453,801	449,949	447,587
Unemployed	199,682	184,010	212,699	52,081	48,834	54,945	34,541	32,727	36,484
% Unemployed	6.4%	6.0%	7.0%	6.3%	6.0%	6.7%	7.1%	6.8%	7.5%
	Washington County			Ozaukee County			Waukesha County		
	Feb-04	Jan-04	Feb-03	Feb-04	Jan-04	Feb-03	Feb-04	Jan-04	Feb-03
Labor force	70,824	69,848	70,337	49,216	48,615	48,516	219,034	216,448	216,739
Employed	66,610	66,044	65,698	46,856	46,458	46,214	208,068	206,302	205,219
Unemployed	4,214	3,804	4,639	2,360	2,157	2,302	10,966	10,146	11,520
% Unemployed	5.9%	5.4%	6.6%	4.8%	4.4%	4.7%	5.0%	4.7%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and DWD, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Figures are not seasonally adjusted and current month's data are preliminary

## Industry Employment Estimates for the Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA: February 2004

Place of Work Employment in 1,000's	Wisconsin			Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA		
	Feb-04	Diff. since Jan-2004	Diff. since Feb-2004	Feb-04	Diff. since Jan-2004	Diff. since Feb-2004
All Industries	2,750.0	15.9	31.6	820.1	7.6	-2.7
Construction/Natural Resources	112.4	-3.2	4.3	28.0	-0.1	-1.6
Manufacturing	499.6	1.6	-5.3	134.3	1.1	-4.0
Retail Trade	313.8	-5.1	5.8	78.8	-0.9	-1.5
Wholesale Trade	112.9	0.3	1.8	39.9	-0.2	-0.1
Transport/Warehouse/Utilities	104.5	-1.1	1.7	29.8	-0.4	-0.3
Financial Activities	161.5	1.7	6.6	62.1	0.0	4.1
Education and Health Services	375.4	3.9	13.8	133.2	1.6	5.2
Leisure and Hospitality	231.6	-3.3	7.6	61.3	-0.7	0.8
Info./Prof./Bus. and Other Services	418.6	1.5	0.5	158.9	1.8	-1.8
Information	49.0	-0.1	-1.1	19.5	-0.3	0.9
Professional and Business Services	242.6	1.5	6.2	100.2	1.9	-1.1
Other Services	127.0	0.1	-4.6	39.2	0.2	-1.6
Fed/State/Local Government	419.7	19.6	-5.2	93.8	5.4	-3.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and DWD, Current Employment Statistics. Figures are rounded and may not sum to total. Current month's figures are preliminary

ployment rate increased by three-tenths of a point to 5.0 percent. Annually, the rate is lower by three-tenths of a percent point.

The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of the **Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA** increased by three-tenths of a point to 6.3 percent in February. The increase in the unemployment rate was rather typical of the January to February change, but how the increase came about was a bit more reminiscent of the early 1990's with huge monthly boosts to both the numbers employed and the unemployed. The boost in the number of employed was very large at +6,600 and the additional unemployed numbered +3,200. February is a month where many are searching for work regardless of economic conditions and the large increase in unemployed this February may indicate that many more residents feel hopeful about their prospects in 2004 and are looking for work. On an annual basis, the metro area shows over 10,600 more employed residents and almost 2,900 fewer unemployed and the unemployment rate is four-tenths of a point lower than at this

time in 2003.

The nonfarm wage and salary employment survey of jobs in February counted a total of 820,100 jobs in the Milwaukee-Waukesha MSA.

Monthly changes in the nonfarm job tally indicate an increase of 7,600 jobs, overall, since January. This was a very large increase in jobs for this month. Data back to 1980 do not show such a large increase for this one month change. Most industry sectors showed at least a modicum of growth. Manufacturing employment grew by 1,100 jobs since January and this is the first February to show such change in this industry since year 2000's gain of 400 jobs. Local government employment via school districts' payrolls showed the largest gain of employment or +5,100 jobs. Most of these workers were working in January, but had not been measured in January's employment survey. Educational services employment, which mainly tracks privately-owned educational institutions, also showed significant gains. Two sectors that lost employment over the month are retail trade (-900 jobs) and leisure and

hospitality (-700 jobs).

From an annual perspective, the metro area shows a net decrease of 2,700 jobs. The largest industry sector employment losses were in manufacturing, followed by government employment, construction, other services and retail trade. Employment gains were exclusive to services-providing industries such as educational and health services, which is no surprise. Financial activities employment is still maintaining a large annual increase and has now for 18 consecutive months. It is presently 4,100 jobs higher than at this point a year ago. Information employment is 4.8 percent higher than in February 2003 which translates to 900 more jobs than one year ago.

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